

GENERAL ASSEMBLY. (Continued on page 17.)

answer to the telegram, &c.," and continuing to the end:

Dr. Whaling's Substitute.

While this Assembly does not regard organic union as practicable at this time, yet it hereby appoints the Committee of Conference on Union asked for by the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and recommends to the proposed conference the consideration of the Federation of all the Presbyterian churches of our country upon some practical and effective basis.

Later in the discussion Rev. Dr. E. R. Leyburn, of Durham, N. C., offered the following substitute for Dr. Whaling's paper:

Substitute of Dr. Leyburn.

Resolved: (1) That the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S., expresses its grateful appreciation of the sentiments voiced in the telegram of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and assures that body of its cordial good will and fraternal love.

(2) That this Assembly decline to appoint a committee to confer with a similar committee of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., on the question of organic union.

(3) That the Assembly appoint a committee of conference and invite the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and any other Presbyterian bodies which may desire to do so, to confer with us on the question of a Federal Union, with Provincial Assemblies, each having complete autonomy, and having undisputed control within its own territory, and looking toward the formation of a quadrennial national or international Assembly with delegated powers.

Another substitute was offered by Rev. Dr. C. W. Grafton for the part of the majority report covered by Dr. Whaling's paper. We regret to find that a copy of this paper did not reach us.

After a full discussion of this subject, taking up nearly two sessions of the Assembly, the papers offered by Dr. Grafton and Dr. Leyburn and the minority report were voted down, and Dr. Whaling's substitute for the latter part of the majority report was adopted by a vote of 160 to 20. The majority report as thus amended was adopted by a large majority, though the final vote was not counted.

In discussing this subject no one expressed himself as in favor of union with the Northern Church. The whole debate was around the question of appointing the committee asked for by the Northern Assembly. Some speakers maintained that there was no reason for appointing such a committee, as there was no desire on the part of the Church for union with the Northern Church. Others insisted that it should be appointed that the matter might be freely and fully discussed. Others said that it would be discourteous to the other Assembly not to appoint the committee.

We can only give a few of the thoughts expressed by a few of the speakers as they discussed this matter.

Debate.

Dr. Whaling, among other things, said that the majority report, as offered, would not make a good impression upon the Northern Church, nor upon our own Church on the border. He said he was not in favor of organic union, and that it is not practicable. Among the reasons which he gave was that the spirituality of the Church ought to be maintained, and we ought to make other churches realize this. Yet we ought not to say to the largest Presbyterian Church in this country, that is so close to us in many particulars, when it invites us to conference, that we are not willing to hold conference with it because of certain acts it has done and certain marks it

wears, though it holds loyally to many of the great doctrines.

He said we ought not to burden our brethren on the border with the odium of such action, which would be unparalleled by that of any Presbyterian Church in this country. He believed that we are too wise and too Christian to do this, and thus be cheated out of the opportunity of doing a great work in the great empire States.

This motion proposes a larger plan, not organic union or absorption, but a unity of a federated kind. There ought to be devised a way to discover a method by which each denomination can preserve its autonomy and at the same time bring about a union of forces. I want it to take in the whole sisterhood of Presbyterian churches, that they may unite in the activities of the Church's work.

No question can be more practical than to imagine whether there may not be some method by which we can get together without giving up anything for which we stand. We say distinctly that we do not believe organic union is practicable, but we have a larger vision.

Rev. Dr. A. A. Wallace, in speaking in favor of the minority report, said that he was willing to take in whole matter of federation, but the matter before the committee was union with Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. There is a growing desire among the people that this be discussed, as was shown by nine Presbyteries speaking on the subject.

I would not say that union is not practicable. Good may come from conference. I hope it may come. I would like to see it brought about on the basis Dr. Whaling suggested.

Rev. Dr. W. H. Fraser, speaking in favor of the majority report, said: "I have no desire to utter any word that would interfere with the fulfilling of the prayer of the Saviour for unity. I want to speak as the representative of the great body represented by this Assembly. We recommend that no committee be appointed. First, because we believe there is no demand for it on the part of the Church. Of eighty-seven Presbyteries only nine have given any consideration to the matter. Only six or seven have expressed any desire for action, the others were opposed. Second, because we do not believe the source from which this movement comes makes it worthy of our response. We are ready to make response when the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., puts itself in proper position. We have in the report given the reasons why we believe they are not in proper relation to us. We have brought cases from their own records to show that they have not kept their agreements. We ought not to take a hypocritical position and say to the world at large that we are willing to overlook these matters, and yet to say in our hearts that we are not willing to overlook them.

Their teaching is contrary to ours as long as they permit the teaching of Union Seminary, New York, as indicated in our report. We may say we cannot appoint such a committee until you put a stop to the practice of New York Presbytery, which has in ten years licensed twenty-one young men who have stood boldly in the Presbytery and said they did not accept the fundamental truths which we hold.

"Our Church separated from the Church, U. S. A., because of our loyalty to the truths of God's word. So to-day we cannot give up our loyalty to these truths. We depose men who do not hold truths as we do. Shall we take action looking to union with a Church that permits the holding of such heresies?

"The open record of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., shows a

failure to observe separation of Church and State. Quoted actions of the Assembly now in session at Dallas, Texas.

"These are some of the reasons why we ought to say to the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., that we cannot temporize, but must be governed by loyalty to God, and so we cannot consider union under present conditions. We shall not be opposed to union when there is real unity."

Rev. Dr. J. B. Hutton said: "We already have some kind of federation with articles of agreement. It has been suggested that it may be desired to have sectional assemblies. The Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., is not seeking union with churches in the North. It is not a question of federation, but of union. That is what was asked for. The resolution asked for appointment of a committee on union and then suggests that it may consider larger federation. Let us say just what we mean.

"In this matter we ought to do what we believe our Lord wants us to do. What purpose have we in going into the conference? Is it to secure comity? What ground would we have for securing the carrying out of agreements?

"Is it that we should unite in order that we may make our testimony heard for the maintenance of truth? It is also said that in the Federal Council we have more influence than all the others. Why? Because we stand for the truth and can make our voices heard, while others are confused.

"Is union desired in order that we may become more liberal in our gifts? We are now one of the most liberal churches in this country.

"Is it that we may become great? It would simply result in our being swallowed up and we would thus become only a part of a great Church where we could not be recognized.

"There is some overlapping among denominations, but very little among Presbyterians, and we stand ready to remedy overlapping more than some others are.

"This thing, if it means anything, means a division in the Southern Church. I do not see the use of appointing a conference to express what we do not need to express. We say we do not want union. Nor do we want to bring this discussion into Presbyteries and churches.

"I do not want our Church to die because of the fruits of the past, because of the prospects of the future, for I believe she has a place in the sisterhood of churches which she ought to maintain."

Rev. Dr. F. M. Hawes, of Louisville, Ky., said: "I believe we are all after the same things, but differ in methods. The beauty of it is we can agree to disagree. What we need is that we may have the right atmosphere. Let us do nothing that will add to the frigidity of the atmosphere, nor do anything that will force matters. Let us show to the world the love of Christ which throbs in our heart."

Rev. Dr. R. W. Jopling, of Austin, Tex., said he saw no reason for appointing the committee to discuss what the minority report and the substitutes say is impracticable. We ought to give our reasons for saying it is inopportune:

First, there is no demand from the Church. Such an attempt at union will produce schism. There are churches, Presbyteries and Synods that will not go into union. We have no right to force our will upon others.

Second, the Church, U. S. A., has failed to live up to its agreements as to comity.

Third, there is a Presbytery under

the control of the Northern Assembly which teaches heresy. A former pastor of this church in which we are meeting held views practically the same. He was ex-communicated. Are you willing to receive him back still holding the same views?

We have here an opportunity to witness for the truth. I will not vote for union until that body lives up to agreement.

Rev. Dr. E. R. Leyburn, of Durham, N. C., said he was opposed to any conference, was unwilling to be swallowed up. The history of the Church would be lost. He was opposed to the majority report, because it makes it impossible to appoint any committee.

Rev. Dr. O. G. Jones, of North Carolina, said: "I believe we all want to do the right thing. I know the troubles in Texas. The U. S. A. people made all kinds of efforts to get our churches, offering to pay them out of debt and so forth. I have been enthusiastic in effort to hold our own. But I believe we ought to appoint the committee. Organic union is not before us.

"Do not give a club to those people to beat us over the head in that country. If they bring in report we do not want, we can turn it down."

Ruling Elder A. N. Leecraft, of Durant, Okla., said the minority are honest and sincere men. I am not in favor of organic union and do not know that I ever will be. If we refuse to appoint the committee we will be misunderstood by our friends and misrepresented by our enemies. He signed the minority report because of its third reason.

Ruling Elder W. C. Fritter, of Dothan, Ala., favored the appointment of the committee, though not in favor of union.

Ruling Elder W. K. Massie, of Lexington, Ky., said we have the U. S. A. churches among us. We honor, esteem and love them. West Lexington Presbytery asks appointment of the committee. This is the least the Assembly can do.

Rev. Dr. A. B. Curry, of Memphis, Tenn., said this is not a new question. It has been before the Assembly many times. This Assembly has never refused to consider an overture from the Church, U. S. A. Shall we now say we will not talk with them? Many of the facts in the majority report are sadly true, and ought to be stated, but not in answer to U. S. A. overture. When the committee is appointed they ought to be stated clearly and fully. I would regret the adoption of the majority report. I believe it would cost us loss. Do not do anything that will cause breaking away. Our constitution requires three-fourths of Presbyteries to vote for union. This cannot be secured. It may be a counter proposition may bring the larger Church into a larger federation. We cannot force union and we can say this to the U. S. A. Church, but we are willing to talk about federation.

Rev. H. S. Springall, of Dallas, Texas, said he was the pastor of a union church, made up of a U. S. and U. S. A. church. The adoption of the majority report is of vital concern to those of the border. He lives where U. S. A. Assembly is now meeting. The supreme question before that body when he left home was the drawing closer to us. He said a report had been published saying that the overture sent us was adopted unanimously and enthusiastically. Therefore, we cannot send the majority report. In the conference is the place to adjust differences.

Such action would have had effect on the churches and work in Texas. The U. S. A. Church will misinterpret our action. He believed the Christian